

Canadian
Pamphlets

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The Manitoba school question

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THE
Manitoba School Question.

SPEECH DELIVERED
BY
Hon. JAMES E. P. PRENDERGAST,
(Member for Woodlands),
IN THE
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

On the 10th and 12th days of March,

A. D. 1890.



The Parliament of Canada will meet a few days hence, and surely all true lovers of education must wish to see the Manitoba Schools difficulty fully solved before the session is over.

The question, in its general principles, has time and again been laid before the public. On the other hand, there are matters connected with the (denominational) Schools Act of 1881, as administered by the Catholic Section of the Suppressed Board of Education, of which comparatively little is known outside the Province.

As these have been made the occasion of serious accusations, mounting sometimes to charges of malfeasance of office against the defunct Catholic Section of the Board, it is thought proper to give more publicity to what was at the time adduced in defence.

For this purpose, we publish in separate form parts of a speech delivered by Mr. Prendergast in 1890.

The constitutional argument and historical part have been expunged, as having since been so often dealt with.

We hope that the portions we reproduce shall enable the public to judge, in the face of so many idle charges, to what extent Catholic Schools in Manitoba have been SECRET and INEFFICIENT,—what the Catholic School Reserve Fund scandal, amongst others, has amounted to,—and WHAT SUMS our Protestant friends have contributed to the education of our Catholic children in Manitoba.

THE "NORTHWEST REVIEW."

WINNIPEG, JANUARY 15th 1893.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

OF

MANITOBA,

10TH AND 12TH MARCH, A.D. 1890.

MR. PRENDERGAST :—

MR. SPEAKER,—

This House, I am sure, will recollect an incident which happened here only a year and a half ago in the course of one of our most spirited debates, when the Hon. Attorney-General* commented with such particular emphasis upon the course of action which my hon. friend for Russell† had chosen fit to adopt in connection with the question then at issue : a course of action, I must say, constituting the most heinous of crimes, in that my hon. friend's opinion happened to be concurred in by the most prominent conservative members of this House. I well recollect, amongst other things, with what ironical enthusiasm, in his eloquent and clear-ringing voice, the hon. gentleman alluded to that "thrill of delight" which, he said, must have passed through the heart of my hon. friend for Russell, when he found himself upon that particular issue, he a liberal, standing upon the same ground and hand in hand with old John Norquay. No irony was too pointed, no sarcasm was too bitter for the hon. gentleman's purpose. The member for Russell had allowed his liberal heart to weaken !

he had allowed his liberal bosom to soften ! the sanctuary of his liberal principles had been invaded ! In fact, Sir, it seemed as though nothing else was left to my hon. friend here, but, acting under the sting of his conscience, to banish himself, a voluntary exile, from the pale of the liberal party.

Since then, Sir, only a few months have passed. But short as they have been, they have not gone by, however, without operating some of those metamorphosis which seem to be the cherished work of time.

Sternier hearts than that of my hon. friend for Russell have weakened ! sterner bosoms have melted ! sanctuaries reputed even more sacred in liberalism, have been invaded ! And we stand to-day in that position that we may well wonder in our turn at that other thrill of delight which must have run through the heart of the hon. Attorney-General, when he found himself, upon that memorable occasion of last summer, upon that celebrated platform at Portage-la-Prairie, standing hand in hand with that good, staunch, sterling old liberal, Mr. Dalton McCarthy. And more, Sir, what must be that feeling of intense delight

*Hon. Jos. Martin.

†Mr. James Fisher.

when to-day, standing on the one side upon that platform, he sees on the other, mustered against him in the stern array of true and earnest statesmanship, those men who are not only the standard bearers of our liberal destinies, but whose names have come to be the very banners of the liberal party: the Blakes, the Lauriers, the Mowats, the Mills, the Cartwrights, and last, but not least, old Alexander Mackenzie.

If those great men of our history of the day, if those vigilant custodians of the constitution, that ark of our alliance, were here, I wonder whether the hon. gentleman would find himself clad with sufficient authority to dictate as against them what liberal principles are or should be, whether in this province or in the Dominion at large. I wonder whether he would reiterate his statement that they have shown themselves recreant to their trust, and whether he would persist in posing in their presence as the self-constituted champion of true liberal principles.

But they are not here, Sir, and no more in spirit than in person. Their vast experience, the weight of their knowledge, the wisdom of their counsel and the solemnity of their warnings are to nothing amongst us. Their vigilant watch over our constitutional liberties is to be overcome, and, as history repeats itself, the Ark has again fallen in the hands of the Philistines.

In the absence of others more worthy, it now falls upon me to rise and speak upon this most grave and difficult question of education which is before the House. I feel the obstacles which are in my way, and the special difficulties under which I labour. I fully realise my inexperience as contrasting with the ability of my friends opposite, and the

great disadvantage under which I have to struggle in giving expression to my views in a language which is not my mother tongue. I have, however, a duty to perform; and if with some hesitancy at the start, and not without fault throughout, I will nevertheless surely perform it without fear. It is a duty which I owe to the 20,000 Roman Catholic citizens of Manitoba, which I owe to all true lovers of christian education without distinction of creed or nationality, which I owe to my constituents, and which I owe to myself.

—Now, Sir, to begin with, it may perhaps be of interest to examine in what spirit this new policy, so dear to the government, has been propounded.

We have heard the Hon. Attorney-General. Of course, we are not allowed to judge by their actions the hon. gentlemen occupying the treasury benches; we are not to see the too-evident intention of their bill: we have only to hear and receive their official declarations in the House. We have it, then, that their sole aim is to create a broad system of education, to establish purely national schools, open to everybody alike, accessible to the Jew and the Gentile, to those from Hebron and those from Mesopotamia. In this, the remotest thought as to nationality or creed has been carefully banished from their minds and much less has it ever been their aim to harm or wound in any way their Roman Catholic compatriots. In fact, it would rather seem as if the hon. gentlemen had a particular affection for us, and as if the bill was for our more especial relief. I would almost, here, be tempted to beseech them to love us a little less, and to love us a little better.

But how was this policy inaugurated?

When, at Melita, last summer, the

Hon. Minister of Public Works, having by his side my hon. friend the Leader of the government, formulated that policy in public for the first time, what words did he use? what feelings did he express?—One surely would have expected him to discuss this grave question in a statesmanlike manner, to lay down some of those great principles underlying the educational problem, and to attempt at least to enlighten the public before him. But no, Sir. His first utterances were an attack against Catholic Schools, an assault upon Catholic ratepayers, an onslaught of the Catholic Section of the Board of Education.

Let us now open, I shall not say one, but all the newspapers supporting the government in this matter. Have they been very eager to show the superiority of the one principle as against the other? Have they devoted many of their columns to an earnest examination, a serious study of the question? No, again. But day after day, and week after week, the worst abuse has been poured on everything and everybody having the name of Catholic, whether connected with educational matters or not.

And my friend the Hon. Attorney-General, what occasion did he choose to have his views public for the first time on the question? With particular tact and no doubt to show how unprejudiced he was in the matter, he chose that very occasion to which I have already referred, when Mr. Dalton McCarthy, engaged in his nefarious campaign and racing from Montreal to Vancouver, stopped last summer at Portage la Prairie to denounce everything French or Catholic in the land.

And to take the matter at its very root, what was the true nature of that

campaign of Mr. McCarthy's? I need not myself denounce it as a bitter war of creed and races, for that gentleman has practically done so himself at that memorable meeting held at Stayner in Ontario. In his speech delivered there, so supreme was the insult flaunted in the face of my nationality, so gross were the words in which it was expressed, that I cannot better stigmatize it than by saying that it is not fit to be quoted in a respectable assembly.

I then wish the hon. gentleman to understand this. If there is one thing above all others of which we feel convinced, it is of the true intention, of the real aim of their policy. It is directed against us as Catholics; it is calculated to destroy one class of schools, our Catholic schools: it is intended to hurt us, in that which is closest to our hearts, our Catholic convictions.

I sincerely and deeply regret, Sir, that I should be so outspoken. I will be credited, I hope, with usually taking rather a moderate view of public matters. My excuse to-day is that I have not freely chosen the position in which I now stand. The very utterances, the very deeds of the gentlemen opposite force us to this one conclusion, and for my part I must confess that I cannot adopt any other.

The Hon. Attorney-General the other day, has exhibited to us in their most minute details, all the delicate and varied beauties of that choice jewel, his School-Bill. It may be very fine, I admit. Yet, Sir, we should not forget that the new law which he proposes, even if excellent, has not yet been tested by experience; that we are not asked to-day to provide for the first time a new province with some educational system or other, but to do away with a

system which has now endured some twenty years amongst us, and blindly substitute another in its place. Especially in view of the fact that we are not too sure of the value of that which we are to receive back, it would then seem consistent with prudence to first ascertain the worth of that which we are asked to give up, and to see if our present educational law is so bad, so unjust, so pernicious after all.

—But, even before doing this, I feel that something should first be said about the charges that have been made in connection with the administration of that law.

Those charges, I must say, both within this House and without, have all been directed, not against the Board of Education generally, but, as might be expected, only against the Catholic section of that Board.

Some are, comparatively speaking, of minor importance; but were the greater number accepted as proven, then Roman Catholics are not to be relied upon, they are not to be trusted, in fact they are not even fit to be ordinary citizens. Yes, for months past, the worst abuse, the most stinging insults, have been catered to us as our daily bread. Gentlemen who have toiled and suffered for twenty, thirty and forty years in this country, who have devoted their whole lives to this sacred cause of education, whose names command a universal feeling of veneration through the length and breadth of this Dominion, have come to be charged with being nothing more than vulgar embezzlers. These, perhaps, were not the exact words, but I will show in a moment whether this is not the clearest inference possible.

To begin with, Catholic schools are said to be "secret."

Much has been said of this secrecy which is thrown by Catholics, (designedly of course) as an obstacle before the investigating eye of the government and of the public. And I understand how often, in their legitimate anxiety, my friends opposite must have wondered at those dark mysteries of mediæval age transferred from the dungeons of the monasteries of old, to our Catholic schools. Their anxiety, I repeat it, was a legitimate one. I only find that it did not go far enough, and I wish to show how easy it would have been to avail themselves of the opportunity to make out a case against Catholic schools, had they only been aware of the powers which the law, printed in full letters as it is, vests in them.

As a matter of fact Catholic schools are no more secret than Protestant schools. They only differ in this: that more Protestants have a right to visit and inspect Catholic schools, than Catholics have to visit Protestant schools.

Section 75 of the Manitoba Schools Act, now in force, provides as follows:

75. "It shall be the duty of every teacher:

(d) "To keep a visitors' book and make an entry therein of every visit; to offer the said book to all visitors, and to request them to note therein any remark which they may think proper.

(e) "To allow at all times the trustees and visitors to inspect the registers and visitors book.

(g) "To hold at the end of every year, at least one public examination."

Section 80 of the same act is in the following words:

80. "The visitors in each school district may be:

(a) "The priest or clergyman.

(b) "The members of the Provincial Legislature.

(c) "The Judges of the Court of Queen's Bench and County Court.

(d) "The members of the section of the Board.

(e) "The trustees of each school."

Now, if the hon. gentlemen will only take the trouble to sum up, they will find that for our Catholic schools, 22 visitors are Catholics, and 38 Protestants, whilst for Protestant schools, 55 are Protestants and 9 Catholics.

So much for the system and the fairness of the principle. But now, as to the manner in which it has been carried out.

All the members of this House, as I have shown are *ex officio* school visitors.

I will then ask: how often have the hon. gentlemen opposite visited our schools, in their eagerness, according to their stereotyped oratory, to grasp with the educational problem? When did the Hon. Attorney-General visit the Catholic school of Portage la Prairie, or the Hon. Minister of Public Works that of Brandon? Yes, Mr. Speaker, our schools are secret. Secret, not for those who sending their children there and being consequently the most interested, have visited them oftentimes, and followed their progress with anxiety; but secret for those who thought it more convenient to close willingly their eyes and thus free their conscience from the recklessness of their statements.

I challenge my hon. friend to show before the House one single instance of unwillingness, whether on the part of the Catholic Section or of any board of Catholic trustees, to open their schools or produce their books, vouchers, registers

or accounts, before any one entitled to make such a demand.

My hon. friend the Leader of the government prides himself with being, with one exception, I believe, the senior member of this House. The Hon. Attorney-General has also been a representative of the people for several parliaments. But, strange to say, I fail to find in the records of this Assembly that these gentlemen have ever attempted to throw some light on this dark subject: Catholic schools. Yet, the educational grant has yearly come before them, and I find that their sole remarks were as to its insufficiency. Yet, the reports of the superintendent of Catholic schools have yearly been laid upon the table for our investigation, and I see that the only action they have taken in connection therewith was to concur in the receiving of the same.

I believe, Sir, in this principle: that however high, however sacred the interests which we intend to subsidise, whether educational or otherwise, it is our solemn duty to see that the money which is voted here out of the public treasury be legitimately employed. This rule, as I understand it, should admit of no possible exception.

But, on the other hand, when a body constituted under an express provision of the law as the Board of Education, has shewn itself for twenty years faithful to its trust,—when for twenty years it has worked practically under the supervision of this House,—when yearly it has submitted its work to us under the shape of the two Superintendants' reports, without provoking any investigation, any inquiry, any adverse criticism on our part,—I say, Sir, that it is not becoming to us, at this late hour, to admit practically that our eyes have been closed for twenty years to this educational question,

under the flimsy pretence that our schools, wholly or in part, are secret.

—A more serious charge, but not the most serious, is in connection with the inefficiency of Catholic schools.

True, we have heard the Hon. Attorney-General declare solemnly that “the Catholic Church had shewn itself utterly unworthy of the trust of education which has been confided to her.” But, laying aside the very thin authority of a letter written by a gentleman from St. Laurent, I fail to see how my friend has proven his case. We have nothing before us on this most important question, absolutely nothing,—neither a reference to the Catholic Superintendent’s reports, neither the inspectors’ reports, not even one single complaint from one solitary Catholic ratepayer.

Now, let us take the curriculum.

The Board of Education, as we know, is divided into two sections, Catholic and Protestant, and each section has under the Act, the right to determine its own curriculum.

The comparison I am about to make is for the greater number of Catholic and Protestant Schools, that is to say, for elementary schools, comprising the four first standards. Of course, collegiate and intermediate departments are not included.

I find this to be the programme approved of:

By the Protestant Section.	By the Catholic Section.
1. Reading.	1. Reading.
2. Spelling.	2. Spelling.
3. Composition.	3. Composition.
4. Grammar.	4. Grammar.
5. Arithmetic.	5. Arithmetic.
6. Book-keeping.	6. Book-keeping.
7. Writing.	7. Writing.
8. Geography.	8. Geography.
9. History.	9. History.
10. Hygiene.	10. Useful knowledge.

By the Protestant Section.

11. Morals & religious instruction

By the Catholic Section.

11. Morals and religious instruction.
12. Deportment or becomingness.
13. Vocal music.
14. Drawing.
15. Dual languages.

The two programmes are manifestly similar in the main, and I dare say that in no particular is the Catholic programme in any way inferior.

If we wish to compare the books used by each section, we shall come to the same result.

For reading in Protestant schools, the first, second, third and fourth readers, together with the literature prescribed for third class teachers’ certificates, correspond for Catholic schools to the first, second, third and fourth readers, together with selected historical subjects and latin; and so in writing, the interrupted series of copy-books 1, 2, 3 and 6 used in Protestant schools is on a parallel with the uninterrupted series of copy-books 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 used in Catholic schools.

For writing, the copy-books are absolutely identical, coming from the very same source.

For reading, the English spellers and readers are Sadlier’s Dominion Catholic Text-Books which are surely excellent in every respect.

The same comparison could be carried through all the other branches, except of course in connection with religious instruction which is surely different in Catholic schools. But, as is held in England, and I will prove it later on, this does not interfere with, and much less does vitiate, the teaching of secular branches.

But, after all, Sir, I must confess that this is only a curriculum. And a more important question is to ascertain how

it has worked, and what results have been obtained thereunder.

I could here refer to several testimonials of a most flattering character, of which our Catholic schools have been the object in the course of the last few years, including diplomas and special honors awarded on the occasion of our provincial or local exhibitions, and, amongst others, that held at Portage-la-Prairie, in the very constituency of the Hon. Attorney-General.

But I would rather confine myself to a few remarks on the inter-colonial exhibition held in England in 1886. The facts in connection with this have already been laid before the public through the eloquent pen of His Grace Archbishop Tache; but as they seem to have been systematically ignored here, and I having had an opportunity of taking cognizance of the same as a member of the Board, I will say a few words on the subject.

It was indeed with a feeling of reluctance and only after much hesitancy, that the Catholic Section of the Board of Education accepted in 1885, Sir Charles Tupper's unexpected invitation to send an exhibit to the Colonial Exhibition. This was early in the fall. The schools had hardly begun a new term, and of course had not yet prepared such specimens as could give a fair idea of their general work. Moreover, the most advanced pupils, who had left before vacation and did not intend to come back, had as we know is customary, carried away with them to their homes, the very best of the school work.

The Catholic section, however, gathered in eight of their schools such exhibits as they could, out of that which was evidently their plain every-day work, and forwarded them to England;

and the result was that a diploma of merit and a medal of honor were awarded to each of the eight schools, as well as to their Superintendent.*

Before this result was known, Sir Charles gave evidence of the earnest interest he took in the Catholic exhibit by the following letter addressed to the Superintendent of Catholic schools:—

“Colonial and Indian Exhibition, 1886,
Canadian Section.

London 29th July 1886.

To T. A. BERNIER, Esq.

MY DEAR SIR:—I duly received your letter of the 3rd inst. and thank you for the memorandum which you have prepared on behalf of your section of the Manitoba Educational Exhibits. I shall be pleased to receive a thousand copies of the memorandum and to see that they are carefully distributed. The exhibit which you have taken such pains to collect has already attracted considerable attention, and I do not doubt it will add to the success of the Dominion at the Exhibition.

I remain, yours faithfully,

(Signed) CHAS. TUPPER.”

My hon. friends will recollect that upon the occasion referred to, the Manitoba exhibit was under the charge of Captain William Clarke, a good Protestant, and a good soldier, who has bled for his country, and who in defying the bullets on the battle-field has learned to fear nothing, not even Catholic schools. Here is the letter he addresses to Mr. Bernier from London on July 27th, 1886:—

DEAR SIR,—I can speak from experience with reference to the excellence of your section, two of my daughters having been for a long time with the good Sisters of St. Boniface where their pro-

Mr. (now Senator) Bernier.

gress was as satisfactory to me, as it was pleasant to them.

I am, etc.,

WILLIAM CLARKE.

These, Sir, are the sentiments of two gentlemen who were in a position to judge, and who, being Protestants, could not be particularly biassed in our favor.

I will now read the comment published in the Canadian Gazette of London on November 4th, 1886, which is in the following words:

"It is generally believed that of all the sister-provinces, that of Manitoba is the least advanced towards civilization. We already know that in many respects such is not the case; but if we consider the excellent scholastic exhibition of that province, we see in what degree that impression is erroneous, especially in the matter of education.

"The collection contains samples of books, exercises, scholastic material, etc. etc., coming from the Catholic schools as well as from the Protestant schools of the province.

"The excellence of the work, and especially of the geographical charts, is incontestible. This is the more pleasing if we consider the fact that many exhibits are dated from the year 1884 and the beginning of the year 1885; it is evident the exhibit is composed of the ordinary duties of the schools in all parts of the province, and not of work specially prepared for the occasion.

"No pretention has been made to eclipse the school exhibits of the other provinces; but the collection that is under our eyes denotes that in one of the most recently "organized" provinces of the Confederation, there exists a school system, which, although respect-

ing the faith and religious convictions of the population, offers to every one an education capable of fitting for the highest rank of the society, the child who is placed under its care."

I do not know, of course, whether this has any weight in the minds of the hon. gentlemen on the government side. But it should be conceded, I believe, that coming from such a high and unprejudiced source, this is at least as good authority as that solitary letter from St. Laurent upon which the Hon. Attorney-General the other night, based all his charges of inefficiency against Catholic schools. Such, then, was the character of the exhibit, and such is also the character of the work which my hon. friends opposite could inspect as official visitors, if, overcoming their repugnance, they only chose to enter the walls of our school rooms and see with their own eyes.

Having produced what I believe to be conclusive evidence of the good work of the Catholic section, I am now free to admit that, owing to diverse circumstances, there are in the province certain Catholic schools that are weak. I say that this must necessarily have been, and must necessarily be for some time to come. In a young province like this, and with our limited resources and sparse settlements, it cannot possibly be expected from the administration of a system so extensive and the success of which is dependant upon so many contingencies, that something or other shall not prove to be somewhat loose somewhere.

I can point out, Sir, to many instances of the kind in the Protestant schools, although the hon. gentlemen say nothing of that side of the question.

Are we to conclude from this that Protestant schools are a failure? Deci-

dedly not, and I hope that the stand which I now take shall not be misunderstood. I do not intend for a moment to reflect disparagingly upon Protestant schools. I believe that they are a credit to our young province, as well as to the section of the board which has managed them.

On the other hand, I wish to show that if the general results have been most satisfactory, they have not been so however without certain exceptions.

Taking the Protestant Superintendent's report for the year ending January 31st, 1885, I find that the inspectors appreciated in the following manner some of the schools.

Speaking of the school at *Sturgeon Creek*, Rev. Mr. Cowley says:

"I am sorry to report unfavorably of the school. At my last inspection, I found it extremely dirty and untidy. The few children present were cowering round the stove. There was nothing of the tidiness and cheerfulness and discipline that mark a well managed school; only one slate pencil was to be found amongst all the scholars, and the examination showed that very little, if any, progress had been made."

Mr. Campbell's report contains the following:

"*Grasmere* school is all but a complete failure.

"*Greenwood* shows poor results this year.

"*Dundas*. The trustees have failed to keep their school open since the summer holidays.

"*Balmoral* must have a new school-house at once. The school has not yet recovered from the disorganization caused by the occupancy for two weeks of an utterly incompetent man. Its record is a poor one in consequence."

Mr. Inspector D. A. Stewart says:

"*Cypress*. Found ten names on the roll and three pupils in attendance on the day of my visit.

"*Heron*. Twenty-one on the roll; seven in attendance.

"*Mackenzie*. Number of names on roll eighteen; number present at date of visit, five.

"*Snowflake*. On the roll were thirty-four names. Seven pupils were present.

"*Silver Springs*. Found a comfortable school-room, but no pupils were present.

"*Oak Creek*. Number of pupils present four.

"*Littleton*. Dec. 11th, I found the school closed for the winter.

"*Dawson*. Closed.

"*Louise*. Closed.

"*Treherne*. Closed.

"*Londesboro*. I visited Oct. 28th. No pupils in attendance. On January 10th, I found five pupils in attendance and forty names on the roll."

In the report for the year ending January 31st 1886, I read the following from Rev. Mr. Jackson:

"*Balmoral* is very backward.

"*Windsor* is very poorly attended and not highly efficient.

"*Greenwood* is very backward."

From Rev. Mr. Fortin:

"*St. Paul's*.—The standing of the pupil is low.

"*Mapleton*. The standing is low."

The reports for the two years ending respectively January 31st 1887 and January 31st 1888, are in a very condensed form, and do not allow for that reason of the same critical examination; but they also indicate numerous and serious shortages. Of the Mennonite schools amongst others (and they are surely not Catholic schools) the first of the two

reports says that "they are sufficiently discouraging to the true friends of the Mennonite people" that "the teachers are illiterate," and that "the work in the school-room is useless or nearly so."

The same report also contains the following remarks of a rather sarcastic nature, in connection with teacher's examinations.

Respecting *dictation for second class* Mr. Somerset writes :

"Eighteen words were given for spelling, not as words are ordinarily pronounced in our exercises of this kind, but in sentences for the pupils to write. The words sugar, pleasant, truly, Wednesday, February, accommodation, interesting, ninety, extremely, committee, preceding and grammatically, occurred casually in these sentences, and the number of misspelled words found in the pupils' papers was *professedly unaccountable to the teacher but extremely suggestive to the examiner.*"

Now, Sir, I will repeat it. This is no evidence that our Protestant schools are a failure. Yet, it is evidence that, like our Catholic schools, they have been somewhat hampered by the exceptional difficulties under which this young province is struggling, and that the insufficiency of our pecuniary resources, the sparsely settled nature of our districts, together with the fact that this is not yet a self-supporting province in matter of teachers, have proven to be as many obstacles in the way of their attaining a more satisfactory result throughout.

Before closing my remarks upon this point, as I have happened to speak of teachers' examinations, I am sure this House will hear with pleasure of a rather amusing incident which occurred no longer ago than last year in the North

West Territories. While perhaps not directly connected with the question at issue, it has nevertheless some bearing upon it, at least by analogy.

It was found in the Territories last year, that the standard of the teachers' examinations was altogether too low, and that it should be brought to a much higher level. I may say, by the way, that I was informed at the time that the real object of this contemplated change was to shut out certain Catholic teachers who happened to belong to some religious order. Be that as it may, the change was effected. Shakespeare, for one, was introduced amongst the new examination subjects, and the standard undoubtedly reached a high, a very high level throughout.

Now, what was the result? It was this, Sir: that at the following examinations, in the whole Northwest Territories, six teachers only could graduate in class one, and the six teachers were six nuns of the Order of the Sisters of Charity.

As might have been expected, it was soon found out that the new programme did not *work*, and it was shortly afterwards wisely reduced to its former standard.

—Ill-judged as I have shown them to have been in so many other respects, it would seem that the members of the Catholic section of the Board of education could have expected to be spared at least in their honesty and their honor. But such was not to be the case.

As I have had occasion to say already, the Catholic section counts among its members gentlemen whose names must appear foremost in the history of this province,—gentlemen who have signalled themselves by their untiring efforts not only in connection with our public schools but also with our University work,—not

only with our elementary schools as we now understand them, but also with those schools of Christian truth dating as far back as the forties and fifties, and the establishment of which was effected under circumstances surely very different from the luxury and comfort with which we are now environed. These men, I repeat it, have been charged with being nothing less than vulgar embezzlers.

I regret that in the course of his speech of several hours, the Hon. Minister of Public Works* has not chosen fit yesterday to explode in our presence that bombshell: the Catholic Reserve Fund.

The hon. gentleman who, the other day, has repudiated the *Brandon Sun* as his organ, cannot deny however that it usually well reflects his own views, and here is what we find in an issue of that weekly published last summer.

It is headed

A STARTLING DISCOVERY

and proceeds thus:—

"Our readers will remember that a short time since, we called attention to the grievances of the Catholic Section of the Board of Education. Since then a startling discovery has been made. The government satisfied themselves that the Catholic Section had in their hands a considerable sum of money that had not been applied to the purposes for which it was voted and intended. As might have been expected, there was considerable reluctance before a decision was arrived at to disgorge. This decision was doubtless hastened by the stand taken by the government. The latter declined to recognize any demand made by the Catholic Section until the matter was adjusted. When they became aware beyond a doubt that the source of

supply would be cut off till a satisfactory adjustment was had, they decided to comply with the demands of the government. The result was that the government received nearly \$14,000.00 in cash from the Catholic Section of the Board. The knowledge that our provincial finances have thus been improved will be a very agreeable surprise to all our citizens."

To make this still plainer, I will also quote in the last issue of the same newspaper, from a pretty long article having my name as a heading, and which I must credit with this at least, that if it is a sound rule for a writer to confine himself closely to his subject, never was the rule better observed than in this case.

It is there said amongst other things:

"Despite Mr. Prendergast's exhibition of valor and his profuse demonstration, the public will, in the absence of evidence to the opposite, continue to believe that the Catholic section received public moneys for a particular purpose, that there was a failure to apply them as they should have done, that these moneys were retained to be applied as might be thought proper, and that the government required and procured a return of something like \$13,000 under the unusual circumstances recited. Some will doubtless be inclined to place these facts alongside the contention of the supporters of Separate Schools, that the maintenance of the latter is a matter of conscience."

Leaving aside the sneer contained in the last three lines, I wish to call the attention of the House to those three allegations: that the Catholic Section received moneys for a particular purpose, that they failed to apply them as they should have done, and that they retained

*Hon. Mr. Smart.

them to apply them as they might think proper.

To begin with, is not this a straight charge of embezzlement?

But I will try and show :

1. For what purposes these moneys were voted and received ;

2. What use was made, and was intended to be made, of those moneys ; .

3. In what sense, and for whom, the discovery alluded to must indeed have been startling.

Now the facts are simply these :

In the course of last summer, the Catholic Section had accumulated out of yearly savings dating from as far back as 1880, a Reserve Fund of \$11,000, which, with interest, amounted to something like \$13,000. That amount was lying in the Imperial Bank. The government ordered the Catholic Section to pay this over to the Provincial Treasurer, which was done. So that, at all events, if we only take the practical results, the case may be summed up by saying : that in 1880 the Catholic Section began to economize on its yearly revenue, that in 1889 the sum total of this economy was lying in a chartered Bank, and that it was paid over to the government at their request. A most lamentable state of affairs indeed !

But for what purposes are such moneys voted yearly by the House?

I say for the purposes mentioned in the statute.

Section 5 of our School Act of 1872—and the law in this respect has stood the same as late as last year—says :

5. Out of the sums so apportioned to each Section . . . ; Provided, however, that each Section of the Board may reserve for unforeseen expenses or general school purposes a sum not exceeding ten per cent of its share of the grant.

This is then the authority, and the very best authority, under which the Reserve Fund was created, and I am not responsible if the hon. gentlemen opposite have ignored this provision which has stood for fifteen years on our statute books.

But what was the object of this Reserve Fund?

Both Sections of the Board have experienced from away back, that two or three, and sometimes four and five months would lapse after the school year was over, before the government grant would be paid over to them. The bulk of the expenses of the half-year would then remain unsatisfied, the teachers whose salaries remained unpaid would refuse to enter into a new agreement, and the general result was of course most detrimental to the cause of education. For that reason the Catholic Section—and the Protestant Section as well—thought that it would be most desirable to accumulate by degrees a Reserve Fund, out of which the most pressing demands could be met, and which, once established, would be renewed yearly when the government grant was paid over.

Such was the action and such were the motives of the Catholic Section, and there lies the scandal.

As I have said, this Reserve Fund did not acquire its ultimate proportions all at once, but was the work of more than seven years' steady savings. Neither was it all the time on the increase.

In 1880 it amounted to	\$1,807.
1881 "	\$5,508.
1882 "	\$4,693.
1883 "	\$1,748.
1884 "	\$6,131.
1885 "	\$7,376.
1886 "	\$11,400.
1887 "	\$13,328.

But I find, Sir, that the Protestant Section also had a Reserve Fund, although we have heard nothing of the scandal in this case:—a Reserve Fund which has been in existence, if not for eight years, at least for five years, and the principle stands the same;—a Reserve Fund which at one time amounted to \$9,631.41, and that is pretty close to \$11,463.30 I should think.

Now Sir, who would believe it, in this House where we hear of “secret schools” and of “startling discoveries.”

Ever since 1871, the reports of the two Superintendents of Education have yearly been laid upon the table of the House, showing in full letters and figures when the two Reserve Funds were created and how they prospered, and year after year these reports have been adopted by us and ordered to be printed amongst our sessional papers.

If, in spite of all this, the hon. gentlemen opposite were “startled” at that so-called “discovery,” we must necessarily infer that up to this day they have stood in ignorance of the statute law which they now proclaim so pernicious; and the public will undoubtedly be somewhat puzzled to couple their great anxiety in matters of education, with the neglect which they have shewn for nearly 20 years in adopting and printing educational reports which they did not even take the trouble to peruse.

I then contend, Sir, that there was statutory authority for creating a Reserve Fund, that it was intended only for lawful purposes, that it was used only for lawful purposes, and that all the circumstances in connection therewith were yearly made public in the broadest sense of the word.

The \$13,000 have now been handed

over to the government, whose authority in the matter I surely question.

However, I sincerely hope that twenty years hence, if they are yet in power, the gentlemen occupying the Treasury benches will renew this scandal, by showing that their steady savings shall have then similarly resulted in a substantial deposit lying in some chartered Bank to the credit of the province.

—I will now deal with the fourth and last charge—or I should perhaps rather call it an objection—as it is not exactly disparaging to Catholics, but rather against the educational system now in force.

We are told that Catholic Schools have been and are still in receipt of a larger portion of public monies than Protestant schools; and after having quoted some figures on the subject at the Melita banquet, the Hon. Minister of Public Works is reported in the *Brandon Sun* as having summed up his remarks by saying: “This means that the Protestants of this country have been directly taxed to educate the children of Catholics.”

Well, let us see how the law operates.

Our schools derive their support from two sources: school taxes, and the legislative grant.

As to the first, clause 30 of the Manitoba Schools Act says: “In no case shall a Protestant ratepayer be compelled to pay for a Catholic School, nor a Catholic ratepayer for a Protestant school.” And this, I suppose, disposes of the argument as far as taxation is concerned.

As for the apportionment of the grant, section 85 of the same Act provides how it is done, the basis being the school census.

The law provides that in each school district, whether Catholic or Protestant,

a yearly census shall be taken of all the children of school age living within its limits, giving the full names and exact age of each child, and indicating those who attend school and those who do not. This census has further to be signed by the chairman and secretary of the Board of Trustees, and sworn to before a justice of the peace as to its correctness.

After the two superintendent's have respectively received these local census from the school districts under their control, they hand over the same to the Provincial Secretary whose duty it is, after having satisfied himself that everything is true and correct, to make a general addition of all the names, thereby establishing the general school census of the two populations of the Province: Catholic and Protestant.

Surely, all this offers as little room for fraud as possible.

The apportionment is then made between the two Sections of the Board of Education upon that basis, that is to say, in proportion to the relative number of Catholic and Protestant children of school age in the province.

It is upon this basis that, this year, the Protestant Section received \$98,000 and the Catholic Section \$22,000.

Now, we must not mix up matters, and great care should be taken here to avoid any possible confusion. What disposition each Section may make later on of its portion of the grant, will come afterwards and matters not for the moment. We have only to consider at present the division of the grant between Catholics on the one hand and Protestants on the other, upon the basis mentioned.

Is this an outrage, Sir?

I must recognize that the Hon. Minister of Public Works is perfectly free to find this a proper or an improper basis.

At the same time, there are surely matters so clear, that even in being allowed to criticize them, one is yet forbidden by common sense to carry his blame beyond certain extreme limits.

I say, for my part, that it is absurd to call this system an iniquity. If the Catholic population has one hundred children of school age and the Protestant population two hundred, is it not just and equitable that the first should receive one-third, and the second two-thirds of the general grant? Ignorance or want of training should here be considered as a disease, and education as a remedy; and it is manifest that the amount of education to be imparted through the public grant, should be in proportion with the disease as represented by the number of children of school age.

I may say, Sir, that although this is a good basis, yet, theoretically speaking at least, it is perhaps not the very best in my opinion. A better one still would be the school enrolment of the two populations, which would mean the taking as a basis, not exactly of the whole population of school age, but only of those actually attending school. And a still better one it seems to me, would be the general attendance in the schools of each Section. I said *theoretically speaking*, for although the basis would be changed, yet I have satisfied myself that the proportion would remain unaltered and the result would be the same for each Section as it is now.

Whatever may be of this, the gentlemen opposite have the choice between the three or four systems of apportionment. If the present one is wrong, let them change it. But I really fail to see in what respect this question is essentially connected with the principle of

separate schools; nor why, because a twig should not appear perfectly verdant to the eyes of my hon. friends, we should put the axe to the very root of the tree.

Having shown, I believe, that the principle of the apportionment of the grant is a just one, and that the Catholic section has only received that to which it was entitled, I will now follow the Hon. Minister of Public Works and show the reasons of certain comparisons which he has made.

The hon. gentleman has attempted to prove that Catholic schools, considered not as a whole but individually, have received more money than Protestant schools. He has given us elaborate statistics, and whilst not agreeing with the use he has made of them, I must give him credit for the serious attention he has undoubtedly given the matter.

But it is evident that the hon. gentleman has confused the apportionment of the grant between the two Sections, and the distribution which each Section makes of its own money between the particular schools under its control.

Whatever result my hon. friend may arrive at as to the granting of certain sums to certain schools by one particular Section, it is clear that those particular grants can only come from that portion of the general grant allotted to that Section; and if the first apportionment was fair as I have shown it to be, then one Catholic school may perhaps complain as against another Catholic school, but surely Catholics have no reason to complain of Protestants, nor Protestants of Catholics. The first operation, which is the apportionment, undoubtedly implies a joint interest both of Catholic and Protestant; but the second operation, that of distribution, can only give cause

to internal contentions between the schools of the one Section.

Another error into which the hon. gentleman has fallen and the consequence of which he does not seem to realize, lies in the fact that he has not compared Catholic schools generally with Protestant schools generally, but only Catholic elementary schools with Protestant elementary schools. What, then, if the result is reversed, in comparing Catholic and Protestant schools other than elementary?

I am free to admit that in many instances, certain Catholic elementary schools have received larger sums than Protestant elementary schools; but they have received this, not from the government, but out of that portion of the grant first allotted to their particular Section; not from the public subsidy, but out of that portion of the subsidy which had first become by just apportionment, the Catholic school fund.

This is easily explained.

Each section has, under the statute, power to manage its own schools, to fix the curriculum, and to determine the different grades or standards of teaching. The two Sections have evidently not pursued the very same course in this respect: yet both have exercised what was undeniably their right and privilege.

The Protestant Section had certainly a right to go more extensively into higher education. Whether this was proper or not, it is not our province to examine; they had the right to do so. They could create intermediate and collegiate departments, and devote to them one-half, one-tenth, one-twentieth of their grant, just as they saw fit. On the other hand, the Catholic Section had also a right to use their own discretion; and for

divers reasons (one of which is that the Catholic population has other means of providing for its collegiate studies), the Catholic Section did not choose under the circumstances to go to any considerable extent into higher education. It must then be evident that what was spared in this manner by the Catholic Section out of collegiate departments, went to Catholic elementary schools, the grant to which was increased by so much. But how could this be called Protestant money?

Further. There are certain expenses in connection with the ordinary management of schools, which have run much higher for the Protestant than for the Catholic Section. I will take as an instance the matter of inspections. For one reason or another, the Catholic Section have been enabled to do their inspections at a comparatively very low cost. The density of the French settlements, and the disinterestedness of our parish priests, have contributed materially towards attaining this result.

I find that the salaries paid to their inspectors by each Section for seven years, have been as follows:—

Protestant section.	Catholic section.
1882 \$1,125.00	\$147.50
1883 \$1,803.00	\$185.00
1884 \$3,120.00	\$190.00
1885 \$3,475.00	\$155.00
1886 \$4,195.00	\$165.00
1887 \$5,082.00	\$360.00
1888 \$6,576.00	\$880.00

Here, again, this saving on inspections went clearly to increase the grant to Catholic elementary schools. But, here again, the money was only transferred from one branch of the Catholic Section to another branch of the Catholic Section and can in no way be considered as taken out of the amount legitimately due to Protestants. The preference given by one Section to one of its branches over all its other branches, can in no way

affect the other Section, neither for good or evil. In the same way, the Province of Manitoba may use her *per capita* allowance for railways, agriculture, or any other purpose; but that surely does not affect the *per capita* allowance of Ontario or Quebec.

Another consideration of the very highest importance, is that Catholic schools, as a rule, have a much larger enrolment, and a larger average attendance than Protestant schools. This is due to several causes.

One of these is that the French-speaking settlers have chosen to group closely together, thereby forming more compact settlements. I do not know whether this is wrong; but such is however the fact. They have banded together, forming dense parishes situate mainly in the river districts, where they live in harmony and peace and continue their friendly relations of old. The schools of a thick settlement, whilst being comparatively less numerous, will of course have a larger enrolment and be better attended as a rule.

Another reason is that the French population is almost wholly settled on river lots offering a great depth of two miles or more, but having a very small frontage of some eight or ten chains on an average. The English-speaking population has a distinct preference for township surveys, offering an easy access to every part of the farm alike, but determining at the same time a gap of half a mile between two neighboring houses. I do not know which is right, and which is wrong; but in this particular respect, it is obvious that a Catholic school will gather conveniently a greater number of settlers who are ten chains apart than if they were one half mile apart.

Without criticizing either, although in this I have a decided preference for the first, it is also a fact that French-Canadians marry younger than our English compatriots; so that, proportionately, we have a greater number of settlers contributing children to our schools, and a much lesser number of childless settlers who, by occupying land within a certain radius from the school, cause their neighbors to be further off to that extent from their school center.

It is another well known fact that our French families are much larger, that is to say have more children, than our English-speaking friends. This again may be right or wrong; but this again, I contend, is essentially a matter in which each member of the community should be allowed to use his own discretion. As it is, this fact, along with the others mentioned, accounts for the larger attendance in our schools, and surely the cost of running schools must be higher in proportion with the greater number of pupils.

But, Sir, although I have found it necessary to touch these matters, I do not see how they can affect the question now at issue.

If the basis of the grant is wrong or iniquitous, which I surely deny, let us change it. If abuses have crept in the system, although none have been shown, let the government, by an energetic act of administration, say that the statute must be observed and crush out vigorously such abuses. But to reform administration and to destroy a principle are two things, and the necessity as to the one, even if it were proven, would in no way imply that the latter is desirable or called for.

—Now, what are the general principles

underlying the educational system which the government are now attempting to overthrow.

Those principles, which have stood the same in the main ever since 1871, are as follows:—

1st. A Board of education composed of a certain number of Protestants as Protestants, and of a certain number of Catholics as Catholics.

2nd. Two Sections of the said Board: one Protestant composed of the Protestant members, and one Catholic composed of the Catholic members.

3rd. Each section having power:—to control and administer its own schools, to provide for their discipline, to choose all books, maps and globes to be used therein, to pass by-laws respecting the formation of school districts, and generally for the carrying out of the provisions of the law.

4th. One Protestant member of the Board appointed as Superintendent of the Protestant Section, and one Catholic member of the Board appointed as superintendent of the Catholic Section, each superintendent being the chief executive officer of his Section and being intrusted with the general supervision of the schools of his Section.

5th. School Trustees made corporate bodies with the necessary powers for the maintenance of their schools.

6th. None but Protestants to be eligible as Trustees and qualified to vote in Protestant Districts, and none but Catholics to be eligible as Trustees and qualified to vote in Catholic districts.

7th. Teachers in the schools of the one Section to be first recognized or certificated by such Section.

8th. The legislative school grant annually divided between the two Sections

upon the basis of their respective population of school age.

9th. Each Section to pay out of its share of the grant: first, administration expenses, then \$150.00 to each of its schools, and lastly to distribute the residue between the same schools upon the basis of average attendance.

10th. Power given to each school district to supplement what they receive from the legislative grant, by means of taxation.

11. No Catholics compelled to pay for Protestant schools, and no Protestants compelled to pay for Catholic schools.

Such is then the system which has endured amongst us for twenty years.

Considered in its principles, I say it is a fair system. Considered in practice, the gentleman opposite have failed to show us that it has worked badly. Neither can it be proven that the work of the one Section is detrimental to that of the other. We have no complaints against us, and the country never asked for such a change. In fact, all the evidence before us goes to show that the general population was satisfied, and the government must take the responsibility for having raised the issue.

Of course, the system is denominational. For that reason, I say it is fair. Catholics are citizens for all that, and have a claim to a fair share of the public funds to which they contribute as well as their fellow-citizens of other creeds.

It is useless to say: make education purely secular. This is nonsense. The same experience has affirmed itself everywhere. Education is always sure, by the complex nature of man, to carry a vast amount of religious teaching; and so-called secular or non-sectarian schools

will always be in fact, schools where the religious views of the majority of the state or province shall be taught.

This was keenly felt at the time of the debates on confederation, and upon reading that page of our history, one at once realizes how lively was the issue, and how each section of the country was intensely desirous that their schools should be protected by the very strongest safeguards possible.

My Hon. friend the Minister of Public Works has said that in the Province of Quebec, there are few Protestant schools, and that they are so neglected that practically the province has a national system of education.

But my hon. friend is mistaken.

I find in the report of the Rev. Mr. Rexford, the Protestant Secretary of the Council of Education, that in the province of Quebec, where the Protestant population is 183,990, the number of Protestant elementary schools is 916, the number of Protestant model schools 38, and that of Protestant academies 19, making a total of 1,000 Protestant separate schools all receiving state aid, and having an attendance of nearly 34,500 children.

The Quebec system and the Manitoba system are practically the same. Both are separate and denominational.

Now, let my friends go and preach in the province of Quebec the educational doctrines which seem to them so fair and equitable in this province of Manitoba when directed against Catholics. Or let the government of the Province of Quebec attempt to abolish separate schools and create a secular system of schools as it is called, and we shall see, in the space of forty-eight hours, what conflagration will rage in every portion of this Dominion.

The present system is a good one and a fair one. It shall be the best and the fairest as long as men's opinions will be at variance on religious matters.

It is partly due to this system, that the two sections of the community have been enabled to live peaceably and in amity side by side, and so much so indeed that, up to the present day, it has been the glory and the pride of this young province to stand free from those bitter contentions which are unfortunately too well known in other portions of Canada.

For us, at least, Roman Catholics, the system is satisfactory. If not to others, let a change be made; but why should 15,000 free citizens be involved in such a change against their will? Why should not the voice of our conscience be heard, and why should it not be respected?

I will close this part, before taking up the Constitutional aspect of the question, by quoting the following from the Rev. Mr. Grant, Principal of Queen's University at Kingston. He says in his contribution to Macoun's work on "*Manitoba and the Great Northwest*."—

"Perhaps the most satisfactory factor in the history of Manitoba is its peaceful and harmonious educational development. In every other province of the Dominion, long and angry wars have been waged over common schools, academies and colleges. Well may the province that has no history in this respect be called happy. Manitoba has shown that it is possible to organize University education on a basis that does equal justice to denominational and non-denominational efforts. The harmonious co-operation of the colleges, and their willingness to make changes in their respective ideals, are signal proofs of the wisdom and Catholic spirit

of the men who govern them. Educational problems considered insoluble in other countries and provinces have thus been quickly solved in Manitoba. The evil spirit of sectarianism has been exorcised, not by the ostrich-like wisdom of ignoring sects, but by frankly acknowledging the good work they have done, and securing their co-operation in common objects. Justice is done to all, and in consequence, colleges with different histories, ideals and modes of government gladly send their alumni to one centre to be stamped with the common stamp of the University of Manitoba. May the spirit that has presided over the University in the days of its poverty not desert its authorities when through the development of the country it becomes wealthy and powerful."

This is also the spirit which has presided, Sir, over the whole educational department here, and I trust that in spite of the bold attempt made by the government, it will not desert this House.

—Before we examine this question in its constitutional aspect, I wish to say a few words of the educational history of Manitoba before 1870. That history, I may say, has begun at a more remote period than is generally known. It was not only in the sixties that schools were in existence in Manitoba. From the moment the Reverend Mr. Provencher at the bidding of the Earl of Selkirk, took land on the shores of the Red River, the cause of education had an apostle in Assiniboia and its history began.

In 1819, Latin elements were already being taught at St. Boniface, in the school which had been opened the previous year.

In 1825, so marked were the advances already deriving from the education given by the Catholic Missionaries, that on the second day of July the chief factory of the Hudson's Bay Company assembled in Council at York Factory, passed the following resolution:

"Great benefit being experienced from the benevolent and indefatigable exertion of the Catholic Mission at Red River, in the welfare and moral and religious instruction of its numerous followers; and it being observed with much satisfaction that the influence of the Mission under the direction of the Right Reverend Bishop of Juliopolis has been uniformly directed to the best interest of the settlement and of the country at large, it is resolved That, in order to mark our appreciation of such laudible and disinterested conduct on the part of said Mission, it be recommended to the Honorable Committee, that a sum of sixty pounds per annum be given towards its support."

In 1829, the first school for girls was established at St. Boniface.

In 1838, the first industrial school was also established in St. Boniface. The teaching comprised sewing, knitting, and weaving specially, and it was conducted by experts brought from Quebec.

The fall of 1844 finds the Sisters of Charity on the Red River, and their arrival marks a period of improved education for girls in the Colony.

Schools were thus established by the Catholic Mission at St. Boniface, at St. Norbert and St. Francois Xavier.

I would ask, in this respect, to be allowed to quote a few passages from a public document. It is an official report made by Mr. Henry Youle Hind, of the "Canadian Red River expedition of 1857."

He says at the beginning of chapter 10:

"Education is in a far more advanced state in the colony (Assiniboia) than its isolation and brief career might claim for it under the peculiar circumstances in which the country has been so long placed. There are seventeen schools in the settlement, generally under the supervision of the ministers of the denomination to which they belong."

Further on:—"All of the foregoing establishments are independent of the Sunday schools properly so-called in connection with the different churches."

Speaking of the Church of England schools and quoting from His Lordship the Bishop of Rupert's Land, the report adds:

"The sources of income vary much; ten out of the thirteen schools are connected with the church Missionary Society. . . In the other schools about one half may be paid by the society, sometimes less, and the rest is made up by the parents of the children. . . .

"The sum paid by parents is fifteen shillings a year; when latin is taught, one pound. . . . The parochial school connected with my own church is equal to most parochial schools which I have known in England."

Speaking later of Presbyterian schools, the narrative quotes a letter from the Rev. John Black, from which the following is extracted:—

"First, then, as to the school: it is entirely supported by the people of the district, or rather by those of them who send their children to it. You are aware that we have no public school system in the colony, and this, like the rest, is therefore essentially a denominational school."

On the subject of Catholic schools, the report similarly quotes a letter from

His Grace Archbishop Tache, parts of which are as follows :

"The parishes on the banks of the Red River and the Assiniboine are four in number, St. Boniface, St. Norbert, St. Francois Xavier, and St. Charles. Fifty-eight children receive education in the school of the Brothers of the Christian Doctrine, in the parish of St. Boniface. In the convent belonging to the Sisters of Charity, commonly known in Canada as the Grey Nuns, twenty young ladies are boarded, and receive an excellent education, suitable to their station in life. Besides the boarders, the sisters maintain and educate fifteen poor orphan girls, and keep a day school for the benefit of the poorer portion of the parishioners. In the parish of St. Norbert, thirty-one boys and twenty-nine girls attend the schools kept by a priest and the Sisters of Charity. In the parish of St. Francois Xavier thirteen boys and twenty-six girls receive instruction from the Sisters of Charity."

It is then established, as a matter of fact, that in Assiniboia, prior to Union:— There were schools. That the schools (exclusive of Sunday schools) were either elementary or collegiate, the former being by far the more numerous. That all the schools were denominational, being; Church of England, Presbyterian, or Roman Catholic. That they were denominational in the sense that they were the property of their respective denomination, maintained for their respective benefit and with their respective resources, managed by their respective representatives, and attended respectively by their children. That all the schools were denominational in this other and essential sense, that they imparted the particular religious teach-

ings of their respective denominations, without which they would not have been denominational. That the schools were generally under the supervision of the ministers of the denomination to which they belonged, and this was invariably so for Roman Catholic schools. That the children of the one denomination, and more strictly so for Roman Catholics, attended only the schools of their respective denomination, and in fact, by the grouping of the different elements of the population it could hardly be otherwise. That the people contributed to the schools of their respective denominations and to these only.

Such were then, before the Union, the circumstances of educational life in Assiniboia.

As soon as the entry of Manitoba in Confederation is consummated, such principles as had been under the old regime followed and observed as a matter of practice, are recognized and sanctioned by law; and the first school act, based on the denominational principle, is framed in 1871. From that year to this moment, some twenty years have lapsed and the old school act of 1871 has been modified by some twenty-two amendments; but so wise were its cardinal principles considered, that it may truly be said that so far, we have had but one school law in Manitoba.

From these special circumstances existing before the union, and from the schools act of 1871 framed after the Union, two classes of rights and privileges arise in favor of certain religious denominations in Manitoba, and I propose now to examine them in the light of the British North America Act and of the Manitoba Act.

[The constitutional argument exposed in the Manitoba Legislature in 1890,

before the Court of Queen's Bench both in the first instance and in appeal in 1891, and later before the Supreme Court, the judicial committee of the Privy Council, and the governor-general-in-council is here omitted. So, also, a review of the development of education in England and Canada. The member for Woodlands concluded as follows: ED. N. W. REVIEW.]

—I have nothing more to say, Mr. Speaker, beyond summoning up my position on the matter.

I have endeavored to show that this policy has originated in a fanatical cry of Mr. Dalton McCarthy. I have tried to answer the charges proffered against the Board of Education and particularly the Catholic Section, and to show the satisfactory working of the school law which has stood for twenty years on our statute book.

I have shown that the Bill before the House is contrary to the general policy of the Dominion, to the cardinal principles of Confederation, to the very basis of the solemn compact which has made United-Canada of to-day, and should therefore be disallowed. I have shown also, I believe, that the government in this matter are going beyond the limitations set to their jurisdiction, that the Bill is *ultra vires* and could not stand in our courts of law.

We claim, Sir, both under the British North America Act and under the Manitoba Act. We claim both under the practice followed before the Union, and any violation of our rights and privileges in this respect makes the Bill *ultra vires*; and we claim again under the legislation passed in Manitoba after the Union, and any violation of our privileges in this other respect vests us with the right of seeking redress at the hands of

the central authorities. I admit, Sir, in the words of Lord Cameron in the House of Lords when moving on the Bill which has become the British North America Act, that this appeal clause may seem "a somewhat peculiar arrangement," but I say also with him that it is "an arrangement which should be respected!" and if this legislature intend to infringe to-day upon our educational immunities, then the governor-general-in-council has the right to take the matter in his own hands, and with the aid of Parliament to legislate, in so far as is necessary to protect the minorities, in a manner binding upon the Province.

Those privileges which we claim are not so extraordinary after all, Sir. They are based on the natural law. We claim in the name of parental authority the right to control the education of our children, and without going in the details of the same, be we Catholics or Presbyterians, Episcopalians or Baptists, provided we remain within the pale of Christianity, surely that authority should not be considered as suspicious. Of course, the state which is called upon to aid so many enterprises, should equally bonus those institutions which do the educational work of her citizens. For this purpose, the state has a right to fix the conditions of such grants, to ensure a certain standard of efficiency, and to ascertain by way of inspections whether this has been attained or not. But far is this from controlling the educational department altogether and usurping a place which belongs to the parents alone. We only ask in this respect the same treatment as is accorded in England. The system there, although not perfect in my view, is equitable in this at least, that whilst not recognizing religious instruction it does

not however pretend that it vitiates secular education; and the government seems practically to say: "We do not care whether you are Catholic, Anglican, or Wesleyan; we care not about the nature of your taxes, nor of the present character of your religious teaching, we have nothing to say to that. Build up your schools, educate the young, make up enlightened citizens Catholic or Protestant, and when you come to us and are able to show us result, we will recognize your work by allowing you your fair share of the public moneys."

I may say, Sir, that we do not intend to accept this Bill as it is. We will, if necessary, move against it even to the foot of the Throne. The hon. attorney-general has stated yesterday that even if the House entertains doubts as to the constitutionality of the Act, the proper course is to go ahead and move boldly in the matter and thus throw upon other shoulders the onus of proving it to be unconstitutional. Was that a statesman-like utterance, Sir, to fall from the lips of the chief law adviser of the Crown? Will the House agree with him, that it was not his duty to first remove all doubts which may have existed and do yet exist, and throw the country in a state of turmoil and excitement of which we cannot foresee the nature nor prophecy the full results?

The hon. gentleman has closed his speech with a fervid announcement of his devotion to provincial rights. I had understood, Sir, that provincial rights are such as are made so by the constitution, nothing more and nothing less. But if provincial rights mean simply that the province may well trample on the constitution, rebel itself against solemn pledges, maintain the one side of a contract and repudiate the other, well

then, I repudiate such an interpretation, and I am not for such provincial rights.

As a Protestant statesman, Guizot has said: The Catholic church is the greatest teacher of respect for authority which the world has ever seen."

And so, Sir, we have the greatest respect possible for the law. But we decline to consider as law the whims and fancies and legislative excentricities of my honorable friend opposite. I will then advise him, if he wishes to avoid consequences which may be more serious than he anticipates, to be careful before sending his bailiffs and attempting to distrain on our property. We will not submit to the Act until more tangible proof of its constitutionality is forthcoming. I have no doubt but that it will receive some majority in this House. The question will then be brought before the courts and we will appeal to every possible tribunal and avail ourselves of all the remedies which the Constitution warrants. When the Government can come back and say: "This is the decision of the highest and last authority, after the whole jurisdiction provided by law has been resorted to," then I for one, and I believe the whole Catholic people of Manitoba, would submit—sad but resigned; conscious that we have contended for the most elementary principles of Christianity; and we may possibly then look for homes in other countries where, perhaps, we may not find a more favorable state of things, but where, at least, the principle will not have laid down that the faith of contracts may be ruthlessly trampled upon, that right is sacred only when in the hands of a majority, and that the most solemn pledges are in the hands of politicians as mere trifles to be used for party purposes.

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